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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
THE SITUATION IN THE
OCCUPIED TERRITORIES
OF CROATIA

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 14 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 4 February 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on Eastern Slavonia, Croatia.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "The situation in the occupied territories of Croatia", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 11 February 1997 by the Presidency of the European Union concerning Eastern Slavonia (Croatia)

The European Union has noted with satisfaction the statement of 31 January 1997 by the President of the United Nations Security Council welcoming the Croatian Government's letter of intent on achievement of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into Croatia and emphasizing the importance of the holding of the elections to be organized by the Transitional Administration. Completion of the peaceful reintegration of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium and restoration of their multi-ethnic character is an important part of international efforts to maintain peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

The European Union endorses the view taken by the Security Council and the Transitional Administrator that the rights and guarantees listed in the Croatian Government's letter, if implemented in their entirety, represent a solid basis for holding elections at the same time as those in the rest of Croatia and allow substantial progress to be made towards achieving peaceful reintegration of the region. The European Union, like the Security Council, would emphasize that the holding and certification of elections, according to a decision by the Transitional Administration, within the envisaged timescale, will be possible only if the Croatian authorities respect their obligations. The European Union therefore calls upon the parties to cooperate fully in this process of peaceful reintegration.

In this context, the European Union also reaffirms the right of Serbian refugees from Croatia at present living in neighbouring countries to obtain citizenship, return safely and participate in future elections. Implementation of the commitments given by the Croatian Government during and after the mandate of the UNTAES is an essential factor for the future development of relations between the Republic of Croatia and the European Union.

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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-second year

Letter dated 14 February 1997 from the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement issued on 13 February 1997 by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the eighth anniversary of the Iranian fatwa condemning Salman Rushdie.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under the item entitled "Human rights questions: human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms", and of the Security Council.

(Signed) N. H. BIEGMAN
Permanent Representative of the
Netherlands to the United Nations

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ANNEX

[Original: English and French]

Statement issued on 13 February 1997 by the Presidency of the European Union on the eighth anniversary of the Iranian fatwa against Salman Rushdie

On the eighth anniversary of the publication of the fatwa condemning the British author Salman Rushdie to death and calling for his assassination, the European Union recalls and repeats the solemn affirmations it made on the anniversaries of the fatwa according to which the fatwa, decreed in defiance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principle of the sovereignty of States, in particular regarding the protection by the latter of their nationals, remains null and void.

The European Union deeply regrets the announced increase in the bounty offered to his assassins by a private Iranian organization. Following statements made yesterday by President Rafsanjani, the European Union calls on the Iranian Government to take appropriate steps against any initiative that might endanger ongoing efforts to reach a solution.

The European Union also expresses grave concern over the continuing threats to the life of individuals associated with the work of Mr. Rushdie.

The European Union will continue to take advantage of its critical dialogue with the Islamic Republic of Iran to defend fundamental rights and freedom of expression. Recalling the conclusions of the European Councils of Madrid in December 1995 and Florence in June 1996, the European Union renews its demands that the Islamic Republic of Iran abide by international law and calls upon the Iranian authorities to further efforts to obtain a satisfactory solution in respect of Salman Rushdie.

The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated country Cyprus, and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this statement.